AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A flavor precursor composition comprising as an active ingredient

a flavor precursor compound which is an organic compound represented by Formula (1) shown below in which ~~R^1H~~ R^1SH is a non-volatile compound and ~~R^2H~~ R^2SH is a volatile compound having in the molecule a furan ring structure, including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated, or a thiophene ring structure, including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated, said Formula (1) being:

$$R^1—(S)_n—R^2 \qquad (1)$$

wherein n represents an integer of 1 to 3, ~~R^1H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to a hydrogen atom and R^2H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^2 is bound to a hydrogen atom, wherein~~ R^2 is selected from the group consisting of 2-Furfuryl, 2-Methyl-3-furyl, 5-Methyl-2-furfuryl, 3-Furyl, 1-(2-Furyl)ethyl, 1-(2-Methyl-3-furylthio)ethyl, 2-Furyl, 2-Thenyl, 2-Methyl-3-thienyl, 5-Methyl-2-thenyl, 3-Thienyl, 1-(2-Thienyl)ethyl, 1-(2-Methyl-3-thienylthio)ethyl, 2-Thienyl and hydrogenated forms thereof and ~~the functional group R^1 is selected from the group consisting of functional groups in which~~ R^1SH represents a compound selected from the group consisting of cysteine, homocysteine, glutathione, γ-glutamylcysteine, and cysteinylglycine~~, wherein R^1SH represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to the thiol group~~.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound is cleaved using a reducing compound.

4. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound is cleaved using a compound exerting its reducing ability via a reversible reaction.

5. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound is cleaved using a compound having a free mercapto group.

6. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound is cleaved by heating.

7. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound is cleaved by altering the pH.

8. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound is cleaved by an electric reducing action.

9. (Currently Amended) A novel sulfide compound which is an organic compound represented by Formula (2) shown below in which ~~R^1H~~ $\underline{R^1SH}$ is a non-volatile compound and ~~R^2H~~ $\underline{R^2SH}$ is a volatile compound having in the molecule a furan ring structure, including a

structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated, or a thiophene ring structure, including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated, said Formula (2) being:

$$R^1\text{—}(S)_m\text{—}R^2 \qquad (2)$$

wherein m represents an integer of 2 or 3, ~~R^1H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to a hydrogen atom and R^2H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^2 is bound to a hydrogen atom, wherein~~ R^2 is selected from the group consisting of 2-Furfuryl, 2-Methyl-3-furyl, 5-Methyl-2-furfuryl, 3-Furyl, 1-(2-Furyl)ethyl, 1-(2-Methyl-3-furylthio)ethyl, 2-Furyl, 2-Thenyl, 2-Methyl-3-thienyl, 5-Methyl-2-thenyl, 3-Thienyl, 1-(2-Thienyl)ethyl, 1-(2-Methyl-3-thienylthio)ethyl, 2-Thienyl and hydrogenated forms thereof and ~~the functional group R^1 is selected from the group consisting of functional groups in which~~ R^1SH represents a compound selected from the group consisting of cysteine, homocysteine, glutathione, γ-glutamylcysteine, and cysteinylglycine, ~~wherein R^1SH represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to the thiol group,~~

and

a novel compound which is an organic compound represented by Formula (3) shown below in which ~~R^1H~~ $\underline{R^1SH}$ is a non-volatile compound and ~~R^2H~~ $\underline{R^2SH}$ is a volatile compound having in the molecule a furan ring structure , including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated, or a thiophene ring structure, including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated, said Formula (3) being:

$$R^1—S—R^2 \qquad (3)$$

~~wherein R^1H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to a hydrogen atom and R^2H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^2 is bound to a hydrogen atom,~~ wherein R^2 is selected from the group consisting of 2-Methyl-3-furyl, 5-Methyl-2-furfuryl, 3-Furyl, 1-(2-Furyl)ethyl, 1-(2-Methyl-3-furylthio)ethyl, 2-Furyl, 2-Methyl-3-thienyl, 5-Methyl-2-thenyl, 3-Thienyl, 1-(2-Thienyl)ethyl, 1-(2-Methyl-3-thienylthio)ethyl, 2-Thienyl and hydrogenated forms thereof and ~~the functional group R^1 is selected from the group consisting of functional groups in which~~ R^1SH represents a compound selected from the group consisting of cysteine, homocysteine, glutathione, γ-glutamylcysteine, and cysteinylglycine~~, wherein R^1SH represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to the thiol group~~.

10. - 15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A food or drink comprising a flavor precursor composition of Claim 1.

17. (Previously Presented) A food or drink comprising the sulfide compound of Claim 9.

18. (Currently Amended) A flavor precursor composition comprising as an active ingredient a flavor precursor compound selected from the group consisting of a flavor precursor compound which is an organic compound represented by Formula (4) shown below in which ~~R^1H~~ R^1SH is a non-volatile compound and ~~R^2H~~ R^2SH is a volatile compound having in the molecule a furan ring structure, including a structure where part or all of the carbon-

carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated, or a thiophene ring structure, including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated, said Formula (4) being:

$$R^1—(S)_k—R^2 \qquad (4)$$

wherein k represents an integer of 1 to 3, ~~R^1H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to a hydrogen atom and R^2H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^2 is bound to a hydrogen atom, wherein~~ R^2 is selected from the group consisting of 2-Furfuryl, 2-Methyl-3-furyl, 5-Methyl-2-furfuryl, 3-Furyl, 1-(2-Furyl)ethyl, 1-(2-Methyl-3-furylthio)ethyl, 2-Furyl, 2-Thenyl, 2-Methyl-3-thienyl, 5-Methyl-2-thenyl, 3-Thienyl, 1-(2-Thienyl)ethyl, 1-(2-Methyl-3-thienylthio)ethyl, 2-Thienyl and hydrogenated forms thereof and ~~the functional group R^1 is selected from the group consisting of functional groups in which~~ R^1SH represents a compound selected from the group consisting of cysteine, homocysteine, glutathione, γ-glutamylcysteine, and cysteinylglycine, ~~wherein R^1SH represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to the thiol group~~

and a suitable excipient.

19. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 18 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor is cleaved using a reducing compound.

20. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 18 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor is cleaved using a compound exerting its reducing ability via a reversible reaction.

21. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 18 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor is cleaved using a compound having a free mercapto group.

22. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 18 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor is cleaved by heating.

23. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 18 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor is cleaved by altering the pH.

24. (Previously Presented) A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 18 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor is cleaved by an electric reducing action.

25. (Previously Presented) A food or drink comprising a flavor precursor composition of Claim 18.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 2 and 10-15 were previously canceled.

Claims 1, 9, and 18 have been amended.

The specification has been amended on page 6, beginning at line 4.

The Abstract has been replaced.

The amendment of Claims 1, 9, and 18, the specification, and the Abstract serve to correct an inadvertent error appearing in the same. Specifically, these sections have been amended to replace the improper expressions "R^1H" and "R^2H" with the proper expressions "R^1SH" and "R^2SH", respectively. Claims 1, 9, and 18 have also been amended to remove superfluous language thereby improving the readability of these claims. Support for these amendments can be found in the specification as originally filed, for example at page 12, lines 2-17.

No new matter has been introduced by the present amendment.